



## Part 5—Maintenance

City of Washington & the Borough of East Washington  
Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan



## Inventory

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Maintenance of parks and other municipally-owned properties is essential to providing safe, usable and aesthetically pleasing facilities and areas for the residents of the municipalities, and other visitors. An efficient and effective recreation and parks maintenance program will enhance recreation amenities, save money, reduce liability, improve life expectancy of facilities, create an attractive park atmosphere and foster environmental stewardship.

Parks, facilities and equipment maintenance is completed within each municipality by their own employees. It is recommended that maintenance of these areas continues to be completed in-house. This affords each municipality the ability to properly maintain their facilities. Currently, these responsibilities are being addressed by the Public Works Department in the Borough of East Washington and by the Parks Department in the City of Washington. Since this is a Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan, each of the municipality's maintenance procedures will be addressed separately. However, the majority of the information provided will be applicable either now or in the future for both of the communities.

## City of Washington

### Maintenance Personnel

The City of Washington has a park maintenance department, which is overseen by the Director of Parks. The Director may request that certain projects be completed, but the park foreman establishes the work schedule and daily routine. The department consists of one full time park foreman one full time park laborer, a full time park secretary, and anywhere from one to six part time park laborers. Depending on the park project, the public works department may occasionally help in the parks. For certain projects, outside contractors are used.

### Maintenance Equipment

Generally, the equipment needed for park maintenance is owned by the parks department; however, certain pieces of equipment, such as, a loader and other large equipment may be shared with the road department to avoid duplication. When needed, equipment maintenance is completed in-house, although larger equipment maintenance requirements are outsourced.

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When equipment is no longer operable, park staff make a recommendation to the Director to replace it. The parks department does not have a replacement schedule for their equipment. Future plans are to implement a replacement schedule for parks equipment, which should be relatively since the City maintains a current inventory of all equipment, as shown in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: City's Maintenance Equipment**

Equipment	Year	Purpose	Condition
F-350 Dump	2011	Hauling	Excellent
F-250 Pickup	2010	Transportation	Excellent
Kubota Mower	2011	Mowing	Excellent
Kubota Mower		Mowing	Good
Kubota Mower		Mowing	Good
Gravelly Mower		Mowing	Fair
Dump Truck Plow	2011	Plowing	Excellent
2 plows		Plowing	Poor
24 T Log Splitter		Splitting logs	Good
Tractor			Selling
International Tractor			Selling
Snow Blower	2011	Snow removal	Excellent
Push Mower	2011	Mowing	Excellent
Welding Unit	2000	Welding	Good
Power Washer		Washing	Good
Back Pack Blower		Blowing leaves	Good
Pickup truck	1999	transportation	Good
11 weed wackers	5 work	Weed wacking	Fair
Cutting Torch		Cutting	Fair
60 Gal Compressor			Good

## Maintenance Budget

Budgeting for park maintenance is part of the Park Director's responsibilities. In order for the Director to develop an adequate budget, input from others is gathered; historical budgeting aspects are taken into account; and maintenance usage and budget appropriateness are all

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considered. The park maintenance budget has specific line items for compensation, supplies and expenses, and other services and charges. The budget also has a line item for park capital improvements, which was \$0 in 2012. However, the budget does indicate a Washington Park Development Fund with \$67,826 as of January 1, 2012 and there are no anticipated expenditures from this account in 2012. After preparing the budget, the Park Director reviews the budget with the park foreman and the park secretary and then submits it to City Council. It is then the responsibility of the Mayor and Council to monitor the maintenance capital expenditures. Currently, there is not a projected capital budget beyond one year.

The parks staff works with the Parks Director on all matters dealing with maintenance and budgeting. Materials and supplies are ordered by way of purchase order on a day to day basis with any large purchases requiring a request to the Director. The park secretary keeps track of all purchases made by park employees and submits monthly budget information to the Director.

## Maintenance Plan

The City of Washington Parks Department does not have an equipment preventative maintenance plan in place at this time, although some preventative maintenance procedures are followed on a weekly basis. Plans include developing a preventative maintenance schedule in the near future.

The parks department currently does not have a formal written park maintenance plan to follow; however, the park foreman is working on developing such a plan. The park foreman visits every park site weekly, especially the playgrounds. Any liability issue is addressed as soon as possible, with less dangerous issues address within the month. An immediate goal of the park foreman is to improve the safety of all park playgrounds in 2012.

The parks have been maintained in fair condition considering the resources the park staff has to work with on a daily basis. The majority issues and concerns identified through the park inventory are primarily due to age, location, materials used or drainage problems. Routine maintenance work in the parks include: cutting grass, picking up trash daily, and equipment maintenance. Certain proactive (preventative) maintenance tasks such as equipment maintenance, checking water meters, and power washing pavilions before rentals are done on a regular time schedule.

The only maintenance records kept by the maintenance staff at this time is a daily log of work completed. Some records are maintained by the park secretary, but these mostly deal with rentals, revenues, and expenditures. The swimming pool personnel maintain required records concerning the pool.

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The park foreman oversees the scheduling of park work with the priority based on immediate needs and what others have scheduled, such as rentals. The park department has to maintain several smaller pavilions, a larger pavilion, and the Main Pavilion, which is very large structure. These pavilions vary from fair to excellent condition, mainly due to the age of the facility. With minimal staffing, the park staff has done an adequate job on maintaining the pavilions.

The lack of planning and scheduling in the past has not affected the park maintenance to any significant degree. With a new park foreman, and a desire to improve the condition of all park areas and facilities, formal planning and scheduling of work tasks will need to be put in place.

## Risk Management

The park departments approach to risk management in the past has primarily been reactive rather than proactive with a written risk management plan. With a new park foreman, who is a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI), this approach is changing. A regular playground inspection and record of the inspection is being developed to insure the safety of the playgrounds and avoid any potential liability issues. As another safety precaution, the City does a background check before hiring an individual to work in the parks. The park foreman also has his CPR/AED certification.

## Borough of East Washington

### Maintenance Personnel

The Borough of East Washington does not have a parks department; maintenance is performed by their public works department. The public works department consists of one full time laborer and one part time laborer, who are responsible for mowing lawn in the park, along a trail, and at the Borough's memorial site. They also weed wack, spray weeds, and perform repairs at the playground. It is the full time person's responsibility to determine the work that needs to be completed in the park, order any materials that needed to do the work, and make sure the tasks are completed. He is allowed to purchase the needed materials; however, if it is a larger purchase, he must discuss it with a member of council.

### Maintenance Equipment

The full time person performs all minor maintenance and repairs to the equipment. Beyond that, the equipment is sent out for inspections and major work. The full time person determines the condition of the equipment and recommends to Borough Council any equipment that needs to

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be replaced and/or purchased. The Borough's equipment appears to be well maintained and in relatively good condition, considering the age of some of the equipment. Table 5.2 lists the equipment the Borough uses for maintenance.

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Condition</b>
Ford 550ST	2011	Hauling	Excellent
New Holland Tractor with Attachments	2009	Mowing & Digging	Excellent
Cub Cadet Mower	10 + years	Mowing	Good
GMC 10T Dump	1997	Hauling	Good
Leaf Vacuum	1990	Picking up leaves	Poor
Weed Wacker	2002	Weeding	Good
Weed Wacker	2010	Weeding	Good
Pole Pruner	2008	Trimming	Good
Leaf Blower	2008	Blowing Leaves	Good
Toro Push Mower	2006	Mowing	Good

Currently, there are no records maintained for the equipment, other than a copy of the inspection form.

## Maintenance Budget

The park maintenance budget is determined by past budgets and recommendations from the council person who oversees the park. Borough Council, using this information, develops the Borough's park budget. The council person in charge of the parks then monitors the expenditures and alerts the maintenance staff concerning any work tasks in the park and materials needed. The budget is not projected out into the future, but operates on a year to year basis.

## Maintenance Plan

The Borough does not have a formal preventative maintenance schedule; however, regular equipment maintenance is conducted along with monthly playground inspections. The Borough does not have a maintenance management plan or a turf maintenance plan. The Borough's public works department has done an admirable job to date of maintaining the park and trail.

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## Risk Management

The Borough does not have a risk management plan in place; however, the public works department staff conducts a thorough inspection of the playground equipment each spring along with monthly inspections thereafter. The full time person has his CDL, but no other certifications.

## Analysis & Recommendations

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**Goal #5:** Ensure that all parks and recreation facilities meet current standards regarding safety and usability.

An efficient and effective recreation and parks maintenance program will enhance recreation amenities, save money, reduce liability, improve life expectancy of facilities, create an attractive park atmosphere and foster environmental stewardship.

**Strategy 5.1:** Establish a maintenance plan.

Both municipalities follow a more responsive maintenance plan than a preventative plan in maintaining their park areas and facilities. This is improving in both communities. While they perform adequate routine maintenance in the parks, a formal maintenance plan would provide the maintenance staff with the information needed to prioritize tasks and complete them efficiently and effectively. The formal plan would help to reduce liability risks and assist in the coordination of project planning.

The design and development of a proactive maintenance plan along with a responsive plan will keep the park areas and facilities in top condition. A responsive plan must be available to accommodate unforeseen issues that arise. This plan will provide direction for the immediate repair or closing of a facility until repairs can be made. This is a reactionary plan that will require specific attention to the pending issue and will vary with each situation. A proactive plan is designed to eliminate major issues before they arise. The proactive approach takes into consideration both short and long range maintenance details. This will not eliminate all responsive issues, but will allow the issues to be handled more efficiently when they arise. Another value to the proactive approach is the cost savings. There is a significantly lower cost to providing general maintenance than there is to doing major repairs, not to mention that poor maintenance can result in substandard facility appearance and safety that can eventually affect all of the facilities causing decreased public use of the parks, facilities and programs, and ultimately affect potential revenues.

Developing a proactive maintenance plan may seem like a monumental task, but by conquering it one step at a time, a strong feasible plan can be developed. Step one requires the development and implementation of an inspection program. The City parks department is working on

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developing this and the Borough has this somewhat in place already. All parks, playgrounds, and recreation facilities need to be inspected thoroughly. The information gathered from these inspections, public comments and staff input establishes the first phase in developing the proactive maintenance plan. Through this initial information an effective inspection form can be created and used as a regular part of the maintenance calendar. The form must be flexible in that it will change as the park facilities and its users change. It is recommended that at least one individual in each municipality is designated to do the work associated with the parks and facilities. Depending on the type of work that is being completed, at times at least two people should be available. Otherwise, it can become a safety issue. Any time a person is working alone there is a risk of something happening that could have been prevented.

The second step involves determining the actual financial needs to complete a maintenance task to an acceptable standard. This step will take time in tracking the costs of maintenance in man hours, equipment use and expendable supplies. This will provide valuable information to begin the development of a site specific proactive maintenance plan.

The third step is setting goals to guide the existing and future maintenance of the facilities. These goals will prioritize the needs of the facilities and phase implementation as funds are available. However, safety is the number one goal and safety issues must be addressed immediately. Other goals will follow closely behind and should be addressed as soon as possible in order to maintain quality standards.

This leads into the fourth step of developing standards. The standards are for personnel, as well as, the facilities. The standard created for each facility should reflect the final maintenance outcome at the completion of each task. A checklist broken down by area with clear standards and a list of safety items, supplies, equipment and tools, number of personnel and estimated man hours to complete the task should be readily available to the maintenance staff. For the plan to be effective maintenance personnel need to take pride in their work and have a sense of ownership creating the desire to produce a quality product. Developing a good rapport with the staff through proper communication and team building efforts will result in a more efficient maintenance plan. It is important to stress to staff that quality work is more important than the quantity of work completed.

The proactive approach, once established, will provide a quality ongoing maintenance plan that will ensure safe usable facilities and encourage patrons to continue coming back and potentially generate additional revenue for the municipalities in the future. It is recommended that the maintenance plan include the following:

1. Develop a detailed proactive (preventative) maintenance plan.
2. Continue to complete park maintenance in-house.

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3. Purchase a utility vehicle with a dump to be used by staff for maintenance within Washington Park.
4. Develop a flexible working schedule that includes detailed routine maintenance and priority maintenance.
5. Hire contractors to complete projects or do equipment maintenance that staff cannot adequately maintain or that they don't have the proper credentials or experience to complete.
6. As a safety issue, try to have at least two people working together to maintain facilities, this includes things as simple as collecting trash. This is recommended by insurance companies.
7. Work closely with the sports associations to maintain high standards within their programs, and the maintenance and upkeep of the fields and adjacent areas and facilities that they use.

*Strategy 5.2: Maintain written records of all maintenance activities.*

Maintaining accurate records is an important part of documenting everything that happens in the park. It is recommended that records of work completed and park inspections be recorded, even if it is just a daily log of work done.

A proactive maintenance plan and regular inspections of equipment will maximize the efficiency of the departments and help prevent accidents and unwarranted breakdowns. Therefore, it is recommended that a regular replacement program for all maintenance equipment be instituted.

The written preventative maintenance schedule should include a maintenance record of all repairs for each piece of equipment. Hours/miles should also be recorded for any piece of equipment that has a meter. If major repairs are required and the equipment is sent out to have the work done, this work should also be recorded in a ledger for the specific equipment receiving the repairs.

The maintenance staff should keep records such as: detailed equipment maintenance, playground inspections, turf management, use of chemicals for spraying weeds, etc. Consideration should be given to developing a field maintenance schedule for aerating, fertilization, and weed and pest control. It would greatly enhance the quality of the athletic fields as well as other park areas. This would require Category 23 certification. Also, when applying these applications, signs should be posted informing park visitors of the applications.

Record keeping of all maintenance performed on each piece of equipment will assist in developing a cost benefit analysis. Good record keeping practices and documentation of costs and use will help to justify any budget requests. An annual review of this information at budget

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preparation time will aid in planning and prioritizing the replacement of equipment. As such, the following is recommended:

1. Keep a thorough record of all maintenance on each piece of equipment.
2. Develop a replacement schedule for larger pieces of equipment.
3. Develop a detailed record keeping journal of items such as: equipment maintenance, playground inspections, turf management, and use of chemicals for spraying weeds.

## Strategy 5.3: Develop a risk management plan.

Risk management is defined by DCNR as “the process of making park areas and recreation facilities safer by conducting and documenting routine safety inspections, having procedures in place to correct problems and performing the necessary work promptly.” A risk management plan should cover all recreation areas, facilities, programs and services offered. Each component of the park or recreation area needs to be thoroughly inspected and compared to the standards of acceptable conditions and then classified as a safety risk or in good condition.

Risk management is an important aspect that must be taken seriously in order to provide safe facilities and ensure the safety of park patrons, as well as, those performing the work in the parks. It is highly recommended that a risk management plan be established. To prepare a successful Risk Management Plan, the City and Borough should consider the following:

-  Develop a plan of action by prioritizing identified hazards and determine cost to correct them. Routine playground safety audits must be done to minimize liability.
-  Address problems through the correction of hazards.
-  Be pro-active to preventing accidents.
-  Implement mandatory safety training for staff, immediately act on complaints and repairing equipment with parts from the equipment manufacturer.
-  Document all inspections and corrective steps.

It is recommended that they implement a weekly visual inspection of all park equipment, especially playground equipment, before and/or after heavy use periods. Any hazardous conditions should be noted and repaired immediately or closed, if repairs cannot be made at that time. More detailed monthly inspections should be conducted to ensure safe conditions of all facilities and equipment. A very thorough yearly inspection of all playground equipment is highly recommended. Each of these inspections should be documented and properly filed so that work tasks can be scheduled to address any issues noted and for quick reference in case of potential law suits involving the equipment.

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Risk management record keeping should include daily logs of all maintenance activities, both scheduled and unscheduled. These logs should include the task performed, the amount of time taken, the materials needed and the equipment used. These daily maintenance logs will aid in determining maintenance needs and future budgeting. The development of a parks operation manual, as discussed in Part 4—Administration, would provide the guidance needed in maintaining the parks and recording the necessary information to ensure the safety of the residents and protect the municipality against potential lawsuits. A risk management plan also requires adequate liability insurance coverage. As new equipment is purchased, new facilities constructed and new programs established; liability insurance should be revised to reflect the new changes.

The following recommendations should be incorporated into the risk management plan:

1. Consideration should be given to providing access to an automatic electronic defibrillator (AED) in the park office and/or at the pool.
2. Perform a visual risk assessment and park facility inspection of all areas and facilities within each park on a regular basis. This inspection should then be properly recorded and any issues noted.
3. Develop and record a weekly visual playground inspection routine, a monthly detailed inspection, and a yearly intense inspection (playground audit).

## Strategy 5.4: Minimize the vandalism within city parks.

Vandalism was identified as an issue, particularly in the City's 7th and 8th Ward Playgrounds. A concern of local residents was the prevalence of drugs and other illegal activities taking place in the parks and playgrounds in the evenings and at night. To combat this, the following is recommended:

1. Install security cameras in all City parks.
2. Have police conduct regular foot patrols within each park, particularly within an hour or two after the parks close.
3. Ensure that all park entrances/exits are securely locked at night.
4. Utilize a preventive graffiti coating on surfaces prone to vandalism.
5. Install dusk to dawn lighting in key areas.
6. Utilize game cameras in areas where permanent cameras are not needed. These can be moved around to other areas as needed.